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TWO
LETTERS.

ONE From a
LADY
TO A
FRIEND
Who had married a
Roman-Catholick Gentleman.

The Other from the same
AUTHOR,
To the said
GENTLEMAN;
By which he was converted
from the *Popish* Religion,
to the *Protestant*.

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LETTER I.

My Dear Friend,



E may innocently be as *gay* as we please, in our Conversations ; but still both you and I know, that our principal Business in this World, is to secure our *Happiness* in the *next*. And since there is a great Body of Men, who deny us any *possibility* of *That*, except we communicate with *Them* ; and the Author of the *Book* you lent me, asserts it very positively many times in his Book ; I am perswaded it may be worth our while, to consider their *Arguments* with Attention. And I assure you, I have bestow'd much Application on the *Book* you lent me ; which I believe (for many Reasons) is one of their best. I have sent you my Thoughts upon it ; and think

my self oblig'd to give you my *Reasons* for taking that Liberty, since it was not desir'd. Your having married a Person of that Religion, must necessarily lead you into more Conversation with Persons of that Opinion, than in all probability you would otherwise have met with. And as I verily believe Mr. *A.* loves you extreamly, I cannot but think the time will come, that he will have at Heart the saving of your Soul. The Consequence of which, must be his endeavouring to bring you over to a *Church*, that positively denies you *Salvation* out of her Communion ; tho' perhaps the good nature of some of her particular Members, may prompt them to think otherwise. If ever that time comes, I hope you will make use of the best Helps, particularly our Friend *Philaethes*. But perhaps you may not be displeas'd in the mean time, to look over the Thoughts of a Friend not exceeding your self in Learning, or Capacity ; And so the Reasons may be more level to your Understanding. For I will never believe, that God has put the Knowledge of things necessary to our Salvation, on so hard a Foot, that we must be obliged to be *Learned*, in order to attain to it ; nor that we are obliged to understand all the learned Wangles, of the great Men on both Sides. And indeed the more I read of them, the less I care for them ; they appearing to me,
more

more like Tryals of Wit, than any very sincere Desire to save Souls. I have sent you my Thoughts only on the Book you lent me: But if ever you shall desire them on any other Point, the best I am capable of shall be at your Service. As for Mr. *A.* whose many good Qualities have given me a real value and esteem for him, I shall never take upon me to trouble *Him* (unless desir'd by *Himself*,) either this way or in Conversation; because I have perceiv'd a particular backwardness in him that way; whether from his own natural Temper, or from any particular Commands laid on him, I know not; But I will be sure never to make *Him* uneasy; since I am verily persuaded, the goodness of his Life, and the thorough perswasion he has that he is in the right, will obtain *Mercy* for *Him*, tho' those of that Perswasion will not allow the same Favour to *Us*. But the real love and esteem I have for you both, will always force from my Soul the sincerest Wishes, that his Conscience may be convinced of the Truth. If I should live to hear that good News, I assure you nothing could give greater Satisfaction to

Your most Faithful

Humble Servant,

B. L.



SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
ON

*“ The Shortest Way to end
“ all Disputes in Religion, ”
viz. the Infallibility of the
Church.*



THE *First* Argument in the Book you lent me, is alleging the *Danger of not communicating with an infallible Church* ; which the Author tells us is of terrible *Consequence*. By which Expression, I suppose he means *Damnation* ; as he afterwards says in plain Words. It is worth our Consideration, on how *hard* a Foot the Author puts the Salvation of Mankind, if, after
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Repentance, Faith in Jesus Christ, and a *good Life* (which are the Terms propos'd in the Gospel, and, I think, all that is in *our power*;) we must at last suffer for what is *not* in our own *power*, viz. the not being able to draw the same Consequences from a Text in Scripture, that some other People do.

The *Second* Argument, if true, shows that *all Scripture*, but what proves the *Infallibility* of the Church, is wholly *useless*; since the Author declares, that if there were *no Texts* of Scripture to prove *any Truths* declared by the *Church*, they would still be no less infallible and uncontestable Truths. To what purpose then was all the rest of the Scripture written? Ought not the *Infallibility of the Church* to have been declared in Scripture in as plain Terms, as *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image*? And does it not look as if *Infallibility* was introduc'd merely to supply the want of Scripture, to prove such Doctrines as Men are fond of?

But suppose, by the way, the *Church of Christ*, was really *Infallible*; still it could be only the *True Church of Christ*, that would be *Infallible*. And the *True Church of Christ*, could only be those who were *Successors to Christ and his Apostles* in preaching and practising the *Same True Doctrines* which Christ and his Apostles did; not those who
were

were *Successors* to them in *living in the Same Place*, or *wearing the Same Habits*, or *assuming the Same Titles or Names of Offices*, or using the same *Forms or Ceremonies* or *Manner of laying on of Hands*, or any other *External Rites whatsoever*. And therefore the Question between the *Romanists* and the *Adherers to Scripture*, would still be just where it was ; And there would be no other *possible Mark*, by which any Man could *find* or *discern* this *Infalible Church*, but by comparing the *Doctrines and Practises* of any *Society of professed Christians*, with the *Original Preaching of Christ and his Apostles*. Of the Truth and Reasonableness of which Doctrine, 'tis evident that *every person*, in what *Circumstances* and of what *Capacity* soever, (making Use of *all the Means* that God has afforded him,) is as able to *judge for himself* ; as 'tis possible he should be, in the *same Circumstances* and with the *same Capacity*, to *judge* (amidst the infinite *Contentions* of a Learned World) *what other Person* or *what Church* is *best qualified to judge for him*. But to return to your Author.

The *Third* Argument alledged, is, that *the Protestants* do make use of, and lay much stress on, many things which they are beholden to the *Papists* for. I hope the *Protestants* will never reject any thing which

which they find *good Reason* to retain, purely because it is used in the Church of *Rome*. But I see not how we are beholden to the *Infallibility* of the Church for this. And for the *Scriptures* in particular; we are far from owing them to the *Infallibility* of any one Church: But we receive them from the general Testimony of All Christians since the Days of the Apostles, joined with the Evidence given even by the Adversaries of Christianity: Which is the utmost we can have for any Matter of Fact, at such a distance of Time. Tho' I must add, as to my own private Satisfaction; the purity and excellency of the Doctrines delivered in Scripture, so agreeable to our natural Notions of the Goodness and Justice of God, is a very great strengthening of the Credit of those Books.

But how is it possible for us to receive the *Scriptures* from the *Infallibility* of the Roman Church, since they themselves *pretend* to ground *their Infallibility* upon the *Scripture*? so that the *Scripture* must be first own'd, before the *Church's Infallibility* can be proved.

What follows upon this Head, needs no answer, because it is all founded on a *supposition* that *infallibility* is prov'd. Which when I see done; and the Persons, in whom it resides, ascertained; I shall be as submissive a Member as any other of their

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Communion;

Communion; and readily give up my own Understanding, to follow that of other Persons. Which I much fear was the design of cloathing *Man* with an Attribute, which I believe belongs only to God.

As to what is alledged about the Synod of *Dort*, and the Wrangles of other Churches, I have nothing to say to them. I shall always approve of the 6th Article of the Church of *England*: *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be prov'd thereby, is not to be requir'd of any Man, that it should be believ'd as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation.*

Christ's Promise of Infallibility to his Church, your Author assures us, he will prove by Scripture; and That, not wrapt up in Parables, or a prophetick Language, but deliver'd in Words so easy and intelligible, that no Man can mistake them, except he studies to deceive himself. This, I confess, one might very well expect, in a Promise of such importance, that, when it was made good, was to deprive us of the use of our own Reason for ever after, in judging about things necessary to our Salvation; and to make all the rest of the Scripture (which yet they allow to be writ by inspiration) to be of no farther use to us in Matters of Faith. That our Saviour
could

could have made use of such Terms to promise Infallibility, is plain ; because the Church of *Rome* have made use of such, that we all know what they mean. Now let us see how the Author has proved what he asserts. He has produc'd but *One Promise* for Infallibility : And if that One be as plain as he says, 'tis sufficient. The Promise is This ; that Christ will *build* his *Church upon a Rock, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. The first thing the Author promis'd, was, that the Words made use of to prove this, should not be obscure prophetick Language, but so plain and intelligible, that no Man could mistake them, unless he studied to deceive himself. Now let any one consider, whether these Phrases, *Founded on a Rock*, and, *the Gates of Hell*, are not *figurative* Expressions ; and so far from being intelligible in the Sense he would have them, to prove *Infallibility* ; that, to my Capacity, nothing is plainer than that they do not so much as *allude* to it. The sense, to me, is plainly this ; that *Peters* Faith should be so firm and steady, that it should be as *firm a Foundation* to Christianity, as a *Rock* is to a *Building*. But the Building was to be *fitly fram'd* ; and is, throughout the whole Scriptures, spoken of under the same Metaphor. Thus *James* and *Cephas* are call'd *Pillars*, and *Christ* the *chief Corner-stone*.

The Author will have *the Gates of Hell*, to mean *Errors in the Church*; I think 'tis plain they mean *the Opposition* Christianity would meet with from the Heathen World, which we see in fact did never prevail against it. The Author plainly confesses, the greatest Danger lay there. For, after having enumerated the several *Heresies* that so early infected the Church, (which, by the way, pretty plainly shows, that this *infallible* way of ending Controversies was no better understood in the earliest Ages of Christianity, than it is now by the *Protestants*;) but, says he, *the Ten bloody Persecutions rais'd by the Heathen Emperors in the Three first Centuries, aim'd at nothing less than to extirpate the Christian Religion, and to destroy the Church Root and Branch.* This, I think, looks more likely to be alluded to by *the Gates of Hell*, than Errors in the Church do; which never threatned Christianity Root and Branch with utter extirpation. So that it appears plain to me, that the Promise to *Peter* was This. *You have made a true Confession of Faith; which I know you will so firmly adhere to, that you deserve the Name of a Rock: On which Firmness of yours, I will lay the Foundation of Christianity (or, of my Church) so strong, that all the Powers of the Heathen World, Persecution and*
Death

Death it self, shall never be able to prevail against it.

The next Point is, to consider *How* our Saviour has *made good* this *Promise* of *Infallibility*, (which to me 'tis plain is not here meant; but let us consider *how*, 'tis pretended, he has made it good,) by *sending them* a Guide that should *lead them into all Truth*. 'Tis certain, Christ has promis'd a Guide that shall *lead us into all Truth*, and *remain with us to the end of the World*. And such a Guide he *has* left us, in the *Scriptures* written by those Persons, whom the *Holy Ghost*, the promised *Comforter*, enabled to *call to Mind* all things that our Lord had taught them. But a Promise that we shall have a Guide to *lead us into all Truth*, does not imply, that *we shall never forsake that Guide*, and *fall into Error*. So that your Author's whole Argument is nothing but a *supposing* the *Church of Rome* to be the *Guide*, instead of the *Scriptures*. Therefore it should have come *after* the *Infallibility* of that Church had been prov'd. For *all* the *Promises* here mentioned, are made to *the Apostles*; whom the Author would have us take for *the Church of Rome*; tho', I think, 'tis very plain this was meant personally to *the Apostles*. 'Twas *the Apostles* Christ is here speaking to; and he is here endeavouring to moderate their Grief for his leaving

leaving them ; Whereupon he promises them to send them a *Comforter*, that should *abide with them for ever*. Which cannot regard their Persons alone, says the Author, *because they were not to live for ever*. Yes : The great Business of the Holy Spirit, was to guide *Them* personally into *all Truth*, to call *all Truth into their Memories*, that they might *faithfully teach and record* their Master's Doctrine ; and *Those Records* might guide *the Church*, or *all sincere Christians*, in *ALL AGES*. This, I think, is leading *the Church* into *all Truth*, and *being with it to the end of the World*. But what so particular occasion was there for recalling all Truths to the *Minds of the Apostles*, if the same Spirit was to *inspire* the Church to the end of the World ? Which, I suppose, is what they mean by her being *Infallible* ? In which Case the Church could recall all Truth when she pleas'd, and publish it to the World when she saw it most convenient. Which, in Truth, is the Use the Romish Church has made of this pretended Power ; having brought in some *new Article of Faith or Practise*, in almost every Age.

Your Author having promis'd to *prove* the *Infallibility* of his Church, from *plain Words of Scripture* ; and desir'd the Dispute might be try'd by that ; I think, whatever

ever he says besides That, does not deserve much consideration. And *This* is all that he has offered on that Head; never pretending, after this, to draw one Argument more from Scripture in his whole Book, nor to bring any other Text to prove the Infallibility of his Church. And I confess I am so far from being convinced by *This*, that I am quite astonish'd there should be so little, even in Appearance, to be produced out of Scripture for an Article of Faith, which this Author has told us in many Places in his Book, is so plain, that he cannot see how any Man *can be saved*, that does not communicate with a Church that holds it; that is, with the Church of *Rome*.

The rest of his Book, has much of *Ridicule* in it; which I think very improper for such a Controversy. For if we are all in a State of Damnation, surely we are the Objects of *Pity*, and not of *Mirth*. He spends also much Time in proving what the Protestants never deny'd, and in calling upon them to prove what they never advanc'd. And as to the vile Character he gives *Luther*, if it were true, it no way affects us. I may as well say, I will not believe *Jesus Christ* to be the Son of God, because the Devils affirm him to be so in Scripture. Evidently, if the Devil himself shou'd affirm any Truth, it would be never the less a Truth for his being the Father of Lyes. If then your Author
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has not proved the *Infallibility of the Church* from *Scripture*, it remains that *Scripture* must be our only *infallible Guide*; and neither *His Church*, nor *Martin Luther*, nor *any other* Person or Persons whatsoever. And if *We* can produce many Doctrines amongst the Papists, some directly contrary to the *Scripture*, and some not at all warranted by it; I see not of what Use it would be, to name the *exact* time, when these Corruptions were each one introduced. For if in Fact they are there, 'tis *Our* Business to look for a Church that is without them.

He goes on for some Chapters together, desiring the Protestants to show *when* the Church turn'd from *Protestant* to *Papist*: And he triumphs much on their not being able to do it. I answer: *Whenever* and by *whomsoever* the Scriptures were deny'd to be the whole and the only Guide of Christians in all Matters necessary to Salvation; *then* did *those* Persons turn from Christians to Papists. (And if this hapned before St. *Austin's* Time, your Author may lay as much Stress on *Him* as he pleases, and I may be allow'd to lay as little as I please; for as fond as he is of him, he does not pretend he was infallible.) And *whenever* any thing was introduc'd into any Church *as necessary to Salvation*, which the Scriptures had not declared to be so; *then* did that Church fall into Error. If in Fact the Church of *Rome* has done this

this, what matters the *exact Time when*, or the *Degrees and Steps* by which it was done? *Whenever* we discover it, 'tis our Time and Duty to leave it.

As to Quotations out of the *Fathers*, I am not learned enough to say any thing to them. For which very Reason, I believe they are not necessary for me to know. The *Translation* of the *Scripture*, has been strictly examined; and is in the main attested to by Persons of *All Perswasions*, both among *Believers* and *Unbelievers*; And therefore concerning the *Doctrine* preach'd by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, I am enabled to judge. But as to the *Fathers*, I verily believe I might have been saved, tho' not one of them had ever writ a Word. Nay, I can't help thinking the Way had been even plainer: For I can't but observe, Writers of Controversy always quote the *very same Fathers* in favour of their own Opinions, tho' never so contrary. Of which *Quotations*, I have neither the same *Ability* nor the same *Obligation* to judge, as of the *Doctrine* of *Scripture*.

The *Second Part* of the Book is in answer to one I never saw. All I can say of it, is; that I am sure he has chosen a very weak Gentleman to confute, if he has represented him fairly. But I cannot depart from this Author's own Promise at first, that he would *prove the Infallibility of his Church* from

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Scripture, in *Words so easy and intelligible*, that *whoever does not make it his Study to deceive himself*, must understand them to prove *Infallibility* in the *Romish Church*. For my own Part; the Texts he has produc'd, have been so far from convincing me (who I am sure do not study to deceive my self,) that they have more than ever establish'd me in my Opinion that there is *no Infallibility* but in *God*; and that the *Scriptures* are so, because writ under the Direction of *His Holy Spirit*, as is allow'd by *All* Communications of Christians.

And if these sacred Writings still need to have an *infallible Interpreter*, (which is the Papists *Last Refuge*.) they had just as well not have been writ at all. For the Church might with the same Reason, and with the same Effect, have made use of their *Infallibility* in *All* Points, as they have done in *Some*, without any *Scripture* at all. Which I cannot suppose was writ to direct an *infallible Guide*, but to direct the *Ignorant*. And if so, I cannot imagine why our Saviour and his Apostles should not be supposed to know how to speak as plain to be understood, as any other Body of Men can; who, we are sure, are composed of *fallible* Men, tho' they are to become *infallible* when joined in a Body.

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Upon the whole, I cannot but declare, that, notwithstanding any thing I have seen written to the contrary, I am still clearly of Opinion, that whosoever carefully reads or hears the Scriptures, believes all that his own Reason can make him apprehend is proposed there as matter of Faith, lives to the utmost of his Power according to the Rules there given, seriously repents of any Miscarriages he may have fallen into, and forsakes every known Sin ; shall certainly be saved ; whatever may be threatned by Any uncharitable and presumptuous Body of Men to the contrary.





LETTER II.

S I R,



I S with infinite Pleasure I see you so far become Master of your Self, as to *dare* to make *Use* of the *Reason* God has been pleased to give You. And surely you will then put it to the noblest Use, when you employ it in finding out after *what manner* He is best pleased to be worshipp'd, and in distinguishing *His* Commands from those of mortal Men. And in case this Method should not succeed, as I heartily wish it may, in your finding *Us* to be in the Right; it will, if you find your own Religion to be the true one, make you profess and practice it with much greater Pleasure and Satisfaction: Nay, I believe I may venture to say, it will make your
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remaining in it, even tho' it should be a *false* Religion, safer as to your Salvation; since we cannot possibly believe further than the last Results of our own Judgment will suffer us, after a fair and impartial Inquiry. For which Reason I verily believe *God* requires no more of us; and if *Man* does, I think we *may*, nay, we *ought* to *disregard* them. For, in Truth, we *can* at the most *but* complement them with the *Profession* of what Faith they please to impose. Man *cannot* in reality believe just as he himself has a mind to believe; much less, as another has a mind he should. And if I ought not to take up my Religion purely in Obedience to any Man's *Commands*, without an impartial Enquiry into the Truth of it; as little ought I to take it up, merely because 'tis the Religion I happened to be *educated in*, without the like Enquiry. So that, on all Considerations, you are now upon the noblest Imployment the Mind of Man is capable of: And I doubt not but it will be rewarded accordingly, by God's leading you into the knowledge of all necessary Truth. And since in these Ages God does not work by Miracles, but by ordinary Means; you are in the right to call in all Helps, even tho' very mean ones; as, I am sure, all *I* am able to give, will be. But as I am perswaded your desiring me to say what I can in defence of my own Opinion, flows
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more from your Friendship than from any other Cause; so I am willing to comply with it, without any farther excuses: Adding only this one necessary Caution, that you will not let the Truth suffer from any Defect in its Advocate; nor fancy, if I shall fail of saying what is sufficient to the Purpose, that therefore no Body else can. For, how much soever your Friendship may have prejudiced You in my favour, there are Persons in a much greater Degree superiour to *Me* in their Understandings, then *I* am to those of the lowest Capacities. And if Truth has been too much darkned, for *Me* to be able to make it shine clearly; I hope you will give me leave to procure the Opinion of some such Persons as I have mentioned, upon any Article you may remain dissatisfied in. Wherefore, without any farther Preface, I shall lay before you, *Sir*, what Reasons have convinced *Me*, that the Protestants were in the Right in departing from the Communion of the Church of *Rome*; and that they could not continue in it without mortal Sin.

The Reasons are; *First*, that the Papists have introduced into the Christian Religion, many Things directly contrary to the Scripture, and directly forbidden by it. *Secondly*, That they have imposed many Things, both as to Faith and Practice, which the Scripture has not commanded.

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Tho' there is great variety of Arguments made use of, to prove these Charges ; yet I shall wave them all, except *That One* of pointing out the *Places of Scripture* which are against them. And if I can produce such as plainly are so, 'tis making out the Charge on the *First Complaint*. For if the Scriptures be positively against them, then we are come to this issue ; whether we are to believe the *Scriptures* to be *infallible*, or *The Church of Rome infallible*. By *Infallibility* I suppose is meant, being *guided immediately by the Spirit of God*. Now the Spirit of the God of Truth, cannot contradict it self. So that if the *Church of Rome*, and the *Scripture*, stand in *contradiction* to one another ; they cannot *Both* be infallible. But now the *Church of Rome* it self owns the Scriptures to be infallible : Therefore if we can prove that They act contrary to them, we prove that *That Church* is not infallible.

Then as to the *Second Head*, *viz.* their imposing Rules both of Faith and Practise, without Scripture to justify it ; tho' it does not seem altogether so heavy a Charge as the other, yet I believe we shall find even *This* has quite alter'd the nature of Christianity, which our Saviour tells us is a *light Burden and an easy Yoke*. For I appeal to Any considering Man even of *Their* Communion, whether it be *light and easy*,
to

to give up one's *Reason* and *Understanding* to be govern'd by another Man's; and to be forced to believe (if one can be forced,) directly contrary to them.

I. The *Particulars* upon the *First* Head we charge them with, *viz.* their introducing into Christianity things directly *contrary* to Scripture; are, 1. The Worship of Images. 2. Prayers, and the Service of God, in an unknown Tongue. 3. Locking up the Scriptures from the People, in an unknown Tongue. 4. Transubstantiation. 5. The Communion in One Kind. 6. The Repetition of Christ's propitiatory Sacrifice, in the Mass.

1. *The Worship of Images.* We may very well put this at the Head of our Complaints against your Church, since 'tis the Highest Affront we can put upon Almighty God. And were there no other Reason for departing from the Church of *Rome*, this alone would be sufficient; seeing it is practised in direct contradiction to an express Command of our great Creator, and to the Dictates of our own Reason. The Command is given in the 20th Chapter of *Exodus*: *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven Image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath,—Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* I know, those
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of your Church pretend they do not *worship* Images. Suppose the more Learned part of your Church do not worship them ; is that a sufficient Reason why you should make use of a thing directly contrary to a Command of God, purely to provoke him to jealousy, and to lay a Snare for the weak and simple ; many of whom you must needs be sensible do certainly fall into it by paying Adoration to the very Images ? And do not you *lead them* into it, by showing all Marks of outward Adoration, such as *bowing down* and *kneeling before* them, *burning Incense* to them, carrying them in *Procession*, sending the People on *Pilgrimages* to *One Image* rather than another ? Yet all this (it seems) is not to be thought *Worship*, because the learned Men amongst you know how to distinguish between *internal Worship* and *external Honour* paid to the Image. And suppose all Men knew this Distinction, as they certainly do not ; yet the Command, I think, plainly forbids *both*. For it says, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them*. Which plainly forbids *both*. And it gives the Reason for so doing ; *For I am a jealous God*. Besides, it gives great occasion of Offense to a multitude of People ; which, unless there was an express Command for the Use, is a sufficient Reason to lay it aside. And

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now let us consider the only Reason given by your Church, *for* the Use of Images and Pictures in our Devotion. I never heard any other Reason given, but to *put us in Mind* of the Person represented, in order to help our Devotion. But *how* does this help our Devotion? We can have no Help to That, but by thinking on the *Virtue and Piety* of the Person. And what Idea the *Picture* or *Statue* of a Person should give us of his *Piety* or *Virtues*, I can't imagine. You take care to make every one believe that the *Virgin Mary* and many *other* Holy Women, were very beautiful Persons: But how *That* should make us think of their *good Lives*, I know not. So that all this Scandal is given without the least Profit. But indeed 'tis more than Scandal. For if we must judge of Men by their outward Actions, and I know no other way of judging; you are guilty of direct *Idolatry*. The Roman Catholicks themselves judge of *Others* by this Rule. For, what Roman Catholick, that was travelling, and met a Company of *Indians* following an *Idol* in *Procession*, setting it down in proper Places, and *kneeling down before* it, and paying it many other *Acts of Devotion*, would scruple to call them *Idolators*? And yet, according as you would have us judge, they possibly may not be so; but all this
may

may be done to the Honour of the *True God*, whom they are worshipping *internally*, and only paying a *proper Honour* to their *Images*. I shall dismiss this Head with observing, that I think no more Honour is to be paid to the *Cross*, than to any *other Image*.

2dly, *The Service of God, and Prayers, in an unknown Tongue*. This is so evidently contrary to the Reason of Mankind, and to the Nature of Prayer; that it would be throwing away my Time, to say any thing upon it. But, to show you 'tis as contrary to *Scripture*, as to Reason; I desire you to read the *14th Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians*.

3dly, *Locking up the Scriptures from the People, in an unknown Tongue*. If the *People* be not to read the *Scriptures*, to what purpose are the following Passages in them; which I desire you to turn to? *John the 5th, verse 39. Acts the 17th, verse the 11th. Romans the 15th, verse the 4th. 2 Peter, Chap. 1, verse 19. Revelation, Chap. the 1st, verse 3.* And very many more Passages; which, upon a careful reading of the *Scripture*, you will observe. Besides, that we are continually call'd upon to meditate on God's Word, and to conform our selves to it. Which *how* can we do, if we may not read it? The Usefulness and

Sufficiency of it to Salvation, is abundantly declar'd in the 2 *Epistle to Timothy*, Chap. 3, *verse* 16 ; Which is so exprefs, that I cannot forbear repeating the Words : *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ; and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good Works.* If St. *Paul's* Character here given of the Scriptures, be a true one ; what occasion can there be for *Tradition*, which your Church has made of equal Authority with them ? To what purpose is all this said in Scripture, if your Church will be wiser than Christ and his Apostles, by seeing danger where They saw none ? For your Church says, the reading of the Scripture is apt to lead Men into Errors and Heresies ; Which is in other Words to say, that our Saviour and his Apostles did not know how to express themselves. For assuredly the Spirit of Truth did not *design* to lead Men into Error. But I own, the reading of the Scripture is very apt to make Men *discover* Errors and Heresies : Which I fear is the true Reason of your depressing it so much, and setting up that uncertain Rule of *Tradition* in the place of it.

4thly, *Transubstantiation.* And This, your Church would perswade us is so far from

from being contrary to Scripture, that 'tis founded on *express Words* of our Saviour; *This is my Body.* Now They themselves will allow, that our Saviour *sometimes* speaks *metaphorically*. If he *ever* does so, 'tis *Our* Business to examine *when* he does so. And we are more concern'd to examine in *This* place, than in any *other*; because if these Words are taken in their *literal* sense, they stand in direct contradiction both to the Evidence of all our *Senses*, and of our *Understanding*. So that there will be left us no Standard of Truth. And we must never pretend to judge of any Truth more; being deny'd the Evidence both of *all our Senses* and of our *Understanding*; which are the *only means* God has given us to come at the Knowledge of any Truth. Wherefore I will never believe, that the God of all Goodness acts so tyrannically, as to propose any thing to his Creatures as Matter of Faith, directly contrary to the *only means* of Knowledge he has given them. The Inquiry then is, *how* we are to *know* a metaphorical Expression. I cannot tell whether I shall here speak properly, and as I ought to do if I had Learning. But since the Unlearned ought to have some Meaning when they speak, I shall not scruple to tell you *when* I think I ought to Understand any thing to be a *Metaphor*. *First*; when the
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thing spoken is directly *contrary to Nature*, and so is impossible to be true. This I take to be the *highest* Mark of a metaphorical Expression. When our Saviour calls himself a *Door*, and a *Vine*; and his Disciples *Sheep*; This I suppose every one sees to be a Metaphor at first sight; because the *literal* Sense is quite *contrary to Nature*; and the *figurative* Sense is to all Mankind, according to the Custom and Use of vulgar Speech, the most *obvious* and the most *natural* and the *only reasonable* Sense. If then we are to judge alike in all Like Cases, is it not as *contrary to Nature* for the Body of Christ to be in a hundred Thousand Places at once? And are not our Saviour's Words reasonable, when we take them in that *obvious* and *natural* Sense, of eating the Bread and drinking the Wine *in Remembrance of him*. In the *Next* place we may judge the Expression to be Metaphorical, by the *Reason* our Saviour gives for the instituting of this Sacrament. For, Whatever *lofty* things may be said of the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, out of Zeal to perswade People to the frequent Use of it; our Saviour himself gives but *one Reason* for the Use of it, which is the *Remembring of Him*. Now *how* does the *Bread being changed into his Body*, *when we do not perceive the Change*, assist us in *Remembring Him*? Lastly, Another

ther Reason I have to believe our Saviour's Words *metaphorical*, is; because, if taken in the *literal* Sense, they *contradict other plain Places of Scripture*. For 'tis said, *Acts the 3d, verse 21, That the Heaven must receive him, until the times of Restitution of all Things*. Now how do the Heavens contain him, if we fetch him from thence so many times every Day? He saith, in the *12 Chapter of St. John, verse 8, The Poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always*. Our Saviour *Himself*, after blessing the Cup, calls it *the Fruit of the Vine*, Luke the *22d, verse the 18th*; and *Mark the 14th, verse the 25th*. The *Bread* being *turn'd into the Body of Christ*, seems also never to have been thought of by the *Apostles*, but the quite contrary; since *St. Paul* calls it *Bread* after Consecration, four times in the *first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. the 11th, verse 26, 27, 28*; and in *Chap. the 10th. verse the 16*. This great Mystery is not so much as *once* mentioned in the whole Scripture by any one of the Apostles: And yet, being the hardest Article of Faith that could be propos'd to Mankind, since it stands in contradiction both to *all our Senses*, and to *our Understanding*; one might have expected to have found it declar'd in a *variety of full and repeated* Expressions. I shall dismiss
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This Head, with begging you, Sir, to consider, if the Wafer be not really changed into the Person of our Saviour, *how* you expect to escape the heavy Charge of *Idolatry*, in the *Worship* you pay to the *Host*; Which, if ever any thing was, is giving Divine Worship to the *Creature*.

5thly. The Communion in one kind. I need say nothing on this Head, but only desire you to look into the Words of Institution, and into all the Places I have just now quoted; and see whether ever the Bread be mentioned without the Cup. But we are not to wonder at this, since our Saviour and his Apostles had not that Reason to give, for receiving in one kind, that the Church of *Rome* has; *viz.* that the Blood is in the Flesh, and therefore needs not to be received separately. Strange Presumption! to pretend to know, that one part of our Saviour's own express Institution is *unnecessary*. But since the Blood being in the Flesh, makes the Cup unnecessary to the *Laity*; what makes the Cup necessary to the *Priests*? unless They alone are allow'd to know, that neither Flesh nor Blood are in the Wafer.

6thly, The Repetition of Christ's propitiatory Sacrifice in the Mass. I shall say no more on this Head, than that I believe your Church has no one thing in it, that stands in more direct opposition to the plain Words
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of Scripture. To prove this, I desire you would read the 9th and 10th *Chapters* to the *Hebrews*. I cannot forbear repeating particularly the 10th *verse* of *Chap. 10*. *By the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ ONCE for all*. Your Church calls this an *unbloody Sacrifice* : But you will observe, that *St. Paul* says, there is no Sacrifice that can purge away Sins *without Blood*.

II. Thus, *Sir*, I have dispatch'd what to Me appears in your Church *directly contrary to Scripture*. I shall *next* say somewhat to the many things you are to believe *without* any warrant from Scripture. As, 1. That the Church of *Rome* is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches. 2. That the Bishop of *Rome*, as Successor of *St. Peter* there, is the Supream and Universal Pastor of Christ's Church by divine Appointment; and that it is necessary to Salvation, for every Creature to be subject to the Bishop of *Rome*. 3. The Doctrine of Purgatory, and the Delivery of Souls out of it by Prayers and Masses. 4. The Invocation and Worship of the Blessed Virgin, Angels, and Saints departed. 5. The Sacrament of Penance join'd with Contrition, sufficient for Salvation.

1 and 2. As to the two first Articles concerning the Bishop of *Rome's* Power and *Superiority*
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over other Churches, I should not have much troubled my self about it, but have left it to other Bishops to have disputed their Power with him; were we not all of us concerned in whatever is declared *necessary to Salvation*. But I have often told you, I think nothing so, but what is *declared to be so* in Scripture. And finding no one Word there, of a Bishop of *Rome* at all, or of any one Apostle's Dominion over another; much less of any of their *Successors* Dominion over the Universal Church: I don't see how my Salvation should any way depend on my being subject to the Bishop of *Rome*, rather than to any other Bishop.

3dly. As to the Doctrine of *Purgatory*; 'tis too considerable a Point, and too melancholy a one to submit to, without very clear and express warrant from *Scripture*. But since 'tis the great *Diana* of your Church, by which Craft they have their Gains; and therefore the more to be suspected: I will consider it a little more distinctly. In the first Place, *What occasion* have we for this Purgation of Sins, since 'tis said in the 1st. Chap. to the Hebrews, ver. 3, that *Christ has by himself purged our Sins*. Very insufficiently, it seems, since we must be *purged* over again. Next, I believe, if you consider carefully, you will not think this Doctrine very agreeable to the Discourse of St.

St. Paul in the 8th Chap. to the Romans, and in the 5th Chap. of the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians. It could not be more eligible to *dye* than to live, if we were sure to stop at *Purgatory*. Then, look into the 1st Chapter of St. John's Gospel; and consider whether it be agreeable to what is there and elsewhere in Scripture so frequently said concerning the *Lamb of God taking away the Sins of the World*, that we should still suffer for them after Repentance and a good Life, unless redeem'd again from those Sufferings by the Prayers and Masses of other sinful Men like our selves. In the last Place, see what St. John says of the *State of the Righteous after Death*, in the 14th Chap. of the Revelation, ver. the 13th. And consider also Job's Opinion of it, Chap. the 3d, ver. 17, 18, and 19.

4thly, The *Worship of the Blessed Virgin, Angels, and Saints departed*. As the *Worship of Images* is the greatest Dishonour to God; so I think we may very well say, *This* is the greatest possible Affront to our Saviour. 'Tis in vain here to make that trifling Distinction between a *Mediator* and *Intercessor*. For to Me who am not learned enough to wrangle about Words, *mediating for* and *interceeding for* any one, is the same thing. Now, that our Saviour Jesus Christ is our *only Mediator and Intercessor*, alone appointed of God to be *authoritatively* such;

that, *whatever we ask in his Name*, and according to His Will, we shall receive; and that *there is no other Name by which Men can be saved*; See the following Places of Scripture. *Hebrews, Chap. the 7th. ver. 25. Chap. the 10th, ver. 19, 20. The 1st Epist. to Timothy, Chap. 2, ver. 5. The Gospel of St. John, Chap 14, ver. 14.* And against all worship of *Angels*; *Coloss. Chap. the 2d. ver. 17, 18, 19.* What an open *Affront* then is this to our Saviour; when he has expressly declared himself our *only Mediator and Intercessor*; for *Us* to be still looking out for *other Helps and Helpers*, who, for any thing we know to the contrary, may be wholly ignorant of us, and hear none of the Prayers we put up to them; or, if they *could* hear us, yet have no *Authority* to help us, nor *Promise* to have their *Intercession* heard for us!

And now, pray consider, *Sir*, what an *all-sufficient Mediator and Intercessor* you have almost abandoned, to chuse such *uncertain*, nay, such *forbidden* Helps as these. But I cannot leave this Head without adding, that I am afraid there is something still worse in this. For I have seen some of your Prayers address'd to the *Blessed Virgin*, which call upon Her *directly* for *Help*, and not for *Intercession*; which is more than our Saviour has ever commanded us to do even to
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Himself. If you have ever said any such Prayers to the *Blessed Virgin*, I am sure you have been guilty of what St. *Paul* calls, *not holding the Head*, Col. 2, 19.

stbly, The *last* Thing I mentioned, is the Sacrament of *Penance* join'd with *Contrition*, sufficient for Salvation. That this is without all warrant from Scripture, is (I believe) allow'd, and that 'tis founded wholly on the Authority of the Church. But surely 'tis extremely indiscreet, to venture our Salvation on such a sandy Foundation. For I never remember Salvation promised to any thing, but to *Faith* and *Repentance*, followed with a *good Life*. And except *this* be added to Repentance, I fear we may *confess* and *be absolved* in *vain*. Can any thing be a greater Encouragement to Sin, than the knowing that after a long Life spent in Sin, if I have but just Time before I dye (which very few are without) to be sorry, to confess, and be absolved; I am sure of Heaven, tho' I must stop a little at *Purgatory*, from whence *Money* may fetch me out? Our Saviour says, *How hardly shall a rich Man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!* But I am sure, in *Your Church*, he must be a *Fool* as well as a Rich Man, that is kept out.

Thus, Sir, I have acquainted you with what convinces Me, that we had *very great Reason*

Reason to depart from the Church of *Rome*. But I beg of you once again, not to judge of what *Protestants* have to say, merely from this Performance of mine; but that you will hereby be moved to see what is said by the *Great* and the *Learned*, as well as by the *Mean* and *Unlearned*. And above all, I request of you to read with Attention the *Holy Scriptures*. For That Book alone will show you the Corruptions of your Church, more than all the Writings of the greatest Men. If you find the Doctrines of your Church *There*, you are not bound to regard the Greatest nor the Wisest of our Writers. But if you do *not* find the Doctrines *There*, no Church hath Authority to *add* them. For St. *Paul* saith, in the 1 Chapter to the *Galatians*, verse the 8th; tho' we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than That we have preach'd unto you, let him be accurst.

One thing more, Sir, I must desire you to observe; that these are far from being *All* the Corruptions we charge your Church with. I only singled *These* out, as the most considerable: But the *others* are not Trifles. Such are, for instance, what is call'd the *Discipline* of your Church; such a *Discipline*, as (I think) nothing but the express Command of God, should make any reasonable Person submit to: viz. the *Confessing*

feſſing all one's Thoughts and Actions to a Creature no way ſuperiour to one's ſelf; whereas in Scripture no mention is made of ſuch Confeſſions. Of the like kind is, the Abſtaining from particular ſorts of Meats on particular Days; in expreſs contradiction to St. Paul, Rom. the 14th; and to our Saviour himſelf, who ſays, that whatſoever thing from without, entereth into the Man, it cannot defile him. Then, the Forbidding to Marry: Which is in flat contradiction to the ſame Apoſtle St. Paul, in the 7th Chapter of the firſt Epistle to the Corinthians. Again: Your Works of Merit and Supererogation; tho' our Saviour hath expreſly ſaid, when we have done all, we are unprofitable Servants. Likewise, the Indulgences given out of this Stock. Alſo, the Forbidding to Work on Holy Days, when God has expreſly given us leave to work Six Days. With many other Superſtitious Practiſes, too many for Me to enumerate; enough, I am ſure, for Any one to ſay to your Church, as our Saviour did to the Pharifees; They have made the Word of God of none effect, through their Traditions; And again, in the ſame Chapter, In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. If you find theſe things to be true; keep to the Commands of God; and join, Sir, in
Christian

Christian Communion with your dear
Spouse, and with

Your most Faithful Friend,

And Humble Servant,

B. L.

F I N I S.



